

## Claims

1. (currently amended) A soil amendment composition comprising a hydratable keratin hydrogel precursor or a keratin hydrogel, wherein said hydratable keratin hydrogel precursor or keratin hydrogel is associated with one or more cationic species.
2. (original) The soil amendment of claim 1, wherein said hydratable keratin or keratin hydrogel comprises sulfonate groups.
3. (original) The soil amendment composition of claim 1, wherein said keratin is derived from a source selected from the group consisting of hair, feathers, leather, nail, skin, hooves, fur, beaks, claws and scales.
4. (original) The soil amendment composition of claim 1, wherein said one or more cationic species comprise one or more metal ion species
5. (original) The soil amendment composition of claim 4, wherein said one or more metal ion species are selected from the group consisting of potassium, sodium, copper, zinc, manganese, magnesium and calcium.
6. (original) The soil amendment of composition of claim 1, further comprising a preservative.
7. (original) The soil amendment of composition of claim 6, wherein said preservative is a tetraalkylammonium hydroxide.
8. (currently amended) A soil amendment composition comprising a keratin hydrogel or a hydratable keratin hydrogel precursor, wherein said keratin hydrogel or hydratable keratin hydrogel precursor is derived from hair, includes sulfonate groups and is associated with a plurality of metal ion species.
9. (original) The soil amendment composition of claim 8, wherein said plurality of metal ion species are selected from the group consisting of potassium, sodium, copper, zinc, manganese, magnesium and calcium.

10. (original) The soil amendment of composition of claim 8, further comprising a preservative.

11. (original) The soil amendment of composition of claim 10, wherein said preservative is a tetraalkylammonium hydroxide.

12-51. (canceled)